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PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0469/01 1500954
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 300954Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1533
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1611
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1478
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1615
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0880
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1243
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1671
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4077
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1440
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2098
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0738
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1832
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ23-CH/ECJ5M//

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR M. COPSON AND E. LOKEN
TREASURY FOR J. RALYEA AND T. RAND
COMMERCE FOR BECKY ERKUL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: GOZ SEEKS USG SUPPORT TO CONTINUE ELEPHANT HUNTING
UNDER CITES

Summary

¶1. (SBU) In a May 25 meeting with the Ambassador, Environment and Tourism Minister Francis Nhema sought our support for Zimbabwe's opposition to a proposal by Kenya to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to ban all elephant hunting and trade in elephant products for 20 years. Nhema noted the large and growing size of Zimbabwe's elephant population, the conservation benefits of elephant trophy hunting, and the revenue that it generated. End Summary.

Sustainable and Controlled Elephant Hunting

¶2. (SBU) In a meeting with the Ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs request, Minister Nhema described Zimbabwe's well-protected population of about 100,000 elephants and the practice of trophy hunting under Zimbabwe's 500-elephant per year CITES quota. He said the Kenyan proposal to CITES, up for vote at the June 3-15 CITES meeting in the Netherlands, was ostensibly intended to eliminate poaching, but that elephant poaching in Zimbabwe had fallen steadily to about 100 animals per year as a result of Zimbabwe's progressive

policies.

13. (SBU) Nhema credited the conservation successes to good wildlife management by the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority in the national parks, and to the success of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) on communal land. The widely acclaimed CAMPFIRE program, begun in the mid-1980s, encouraged rural communities to take ownership of local wildlife resources and benefit from conservation-associated employment, shared trophy revenue for community projects, and the controlled provision of much needed protein from the hunt. Nhema said elephant hunting in Zimbabwe helped reduce rural poverty and improve rural living standards and the success of the program had led local communities to assume a sense of ownership in anti-poaching efforts.

For a Tidy Profit

14. (SBU) Nhema said trophy hunting financed the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority's conservation budget. He added that it also provided employment and revenue. Elephant hunting contributed about US\$12 million of the US\$40 million revenue generated directly by trophy hunting in Zimbabwe. (N.B. the trophy fee for a bull elephant is US\$10,000, and the "daily rate" is US\$1,000 with a minimum 21-day length of hunt.) On communal land, Nhema said that 95 percent of CAMPFIRE revenue came from hunting, and about 60 percent of that arose from elephant hunting. Moreover, secondary industries, such as taxidermy services, freight forwarding

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and modest-scale ivory manufacturing also benefited from elephant hunting.

15. (SBU) Nhema added that Zimbabwe accumulated about 13 t of ivory per year, primarily from natural mortality and problem-animal control. Except for confiscated ivory, he said the ivory was sold to registered local dealers and refined into CITES certified game products for the domestic market.

U.S. Role

16. (SBU) Finally, Nhema said the majority of hunters came to Zimbabwe from the U.S. and many were repeat visitors. He said this year's annual international hunting convention in Reno, Nevada in January had been a huge success and that the country's hunting capacity was fully booked for the next four years. The Minister expressed gratitude to the Ambassador for support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2006 in monitoring Zimbabwe's elephant population.

17. (SBU) The Ambassador responded to Nhema's presentation with a promise to convey the Minister's views to Washington and to subsequently inform him of the U.S. position with respect to the proposed ban.

Comment

18. (SBU) In our view, Nhema made a compelling argument in opposition to the Kenyan proposal for a ban on elephant hunting. The fact is that unlike many of its African neighbors, Zimbabwe has done a good job of conserving its wildlife and especially its elephant population; to the point where the herd has grown beyond the carrying capacity of Zimbabwe's natural habitat. Elephant hunting poses no risk to the elephant population in Zimbabwe and moreover makes important contributions to wildlife conservancy in Zimbabwe. While there are some concerns about illicit trade in ivory by

Chinese nationals, the sale of elephant trophies on communal land under the guise of "problem-animal control," and conservancy ownership issues arising from fast-track land reform that we will address septel, nevertheless, the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority of Zimbabwe remains one of the most professional on the continent and is increasingly dependent on the revenue generated from elephant hunting. Without that revenue, the Authority and wildlife conservation in general would take serious hits, ironically leading to an increase in the poaching that the proposal is ostensibly designed to deter.

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